UNITED
NATIONS

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General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/47/7/Add.3
4 November 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-seventh session
Agenda item 104

PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993

Administrative arrangements for the secretariat of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation

Fourth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 46/185 C, section XI, paragraph 3, requested the Secretary-General to study the possibility of alternative arrangements for the secretariat of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR), including its possible merger with the International Atomic Energy Agency, and to report to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/47/26) on the subject.

2. The Advisory Committee notes that UNSCEAR is served by a small secretariat, currently consisting of one Professional and two General Service staff members; a second Professional post has not been filled since 1980. For reasons mentioned in paragraph 4 of the report, documents for review by UNSCEAR are prepared mainly through consultants who are experts/scientists.

3. Pursuant to a decision taken by the General Assembly on 18 December 1973, the secretariat of UNSCEAR was transferred from New York to Vienna, with effect from 1 January 1974. The initial reason for the transfer to a European location was to establish links with the Geneva regional office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and to assist in establishing environmental monitoring and assessment activities within UNEP by making available UNSCEAR experience. Instead of transferring the secretariat to Geneva, however, the General Assembly accepted the offer of accommodation made by the Government of Austria. Since 1979, with the establishment of the

United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV), administrative services for UNSCEAR have been assumed by UNOV.

4. With regard to the proposal for a possible merger of the UNSCEAR secretariat with IAEA, for reasons given in paragraphs 9 to 14 of the report, the Secretary-General recommends that the present organizational location and administrative support arrangements for the UNSCEAR secretariat be maintained.

5. The Committee points out, however, that the Secretary-General has only examined the possibility of a merger of the UNSCEAR secretariat with that of IAEA. The Advisory Committee therefore recommends that as requested in General Assembly resolution 46/185 C, section XI, paragraph 3, other possible alternatives for the organizational location and administrative support arrangements for the UNSCEAR secretariat be explored. Furthermore, the Committee questions the rationale with regard to its inclusion in section 17 (UNEP) of the programme budget, and believes that these matters should be examined and reviewed in the context of both the restructuring exercise within the United Nations Secretariat and the preparation of the 1994-1995 programme budget. The Committee also notes in this regard that the system-wide implications of this matter, including the use of related available expertise within the system, can be taken into account by the Secretary-General in his capacity as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination.